



By offering mobile short-term care in conjunction with settlement services, you can allow more newcomer families to benefit from your programs and to be supported in their transition to life in Canada. As an administrator, selecting safe, appropriate space that meets CNC Requirements (CNCR) is one of your responsibilities. By choosing the right spaces you will not only improve the quality of care for the children in your program, you will reduce safety risks as well.

TAKE TIME TO THINK ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS.

Before you begin your space selection process, take some time to consider your organizational needs. Answering the following questions will help you to determine the type of spaces that you will be looking for.

- What type of service will you be offering your clients?
- How long will you be offering the service?
- When are you planning to operate the sessions?
- How many sessions will there be?
- In how many locations are you considering operating the sessions?
- How many children are expected?

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR SELECTING SPACE

Because mobile care can be offered in a variety of locations and to a variety of age groups, it can be challenging to find the right space. The considerations below will help you to conduct an effective search and to find the best possible space to meet your needs.

Plan Ahead: When selecting space, set aside sufficient time to make the best choice. Giving yourself plenty of time will also help you to ensure that you'll be able to make alternative arrangements if the space is found to be unsafe.

SELECTING SPACE FOR MOBILE CARE

Use the CNC Space Approval Form: The CNC Space Approval Form will help you to identify safe and appropriate spaces. This document is found in the CNCR on the CMAS website. The information you collect on the Space Approval Form will also guide your approval decision and provide a record of the space.

Completing the Space Approval Form will also help you to consider the types of space changes that might be required. Be sure to leave yourself plenty of time. Some changes might need to be completed weeks or days before providing care, while other changes (like covering electrical outlets) can be completed right before children arrive.

Have Options: Select and approve a variety of spaces. By doing so, you will have additional options when operating multiple sessions or expecting a large group of children.

Consult with your Early Childhood Educators (ECEs): ECEs are trained in child development and understand the needs of young children and how these needs relate to space.

Consider Potential Changes: Consider whether or not there is anything about the space that might change over time. For example, think about temperature changes. If you are selecting space in the winter, the temperature may seem comfortable, but consider what will happen if you plan to use it again in the summer. If the space lacks air conditioning, will it be too hot for the children?

Proximity to Washrooms & Emergency Exits: If the washrooms are nearby, young children will be able to access them more easily and they can be properly supervised while doing so. If possible, also select spaces near emergency exits for safe evacuations.

Accessibility: Try to select spaces that are accessible to children with special needs—for example, those who use wheelchairs or other assistive devices.

Suitability for Children: If possible, find a space that has been designed specifically for use by children (e.g., in a community centre or church Sunday school room). This will lower the safety risks considerably.

Proximity to Parents: Space is most appropriate when it is close to the parent activity. Separation anxiety is especially likely for newcomers who are experiencing life-changing transitions, and being close by will likely help everyone to feel less anxious. An added benefit is that parents will be nearby if needed. Although the use of the same room as the parents is permitted in mobile care, it is generally not recommended. In cases where it is not possible to use a separate space, boundaries must be set to ensure that the children remain separate from the parent activity. These boundaries must not obstruct the vision of caregivers who must be able to see all the children at all times.

Group Size and Space: Depending on the size of the physical space available to your program, consider whether your space may need to be divided for use by different age groups or for different types of activity. For example, infants must have a separate space with a floor surface that is suitable for the care of infants (i.e. is soft and easily cleaned). Make sure to measure infant space separately, and consider methods for keeping the area separate and safe (i.e. low shelves, any sturdy equipment or room dividers)

Water Source: If you are planning to serve snacks, ensure that the space or the building has an appropriate food preparation area and is near a water source. Have a plan in place that meets the public health standards for food preparation.

SELECTING SPACE FOR MOBILE CARE

Storage Space: In addition to activity space, the CNCR also state that you must have additional temporary storage space when the session is in operation for strollers, mobile kits, toys and equipment.

Accessibility to Public Transportation: It is always best to choose spaces that are easily accessible by public transport or within walking distance.

Safety: Build in safeguards for children if you are choosing spaces with public access (e.g., public libraries and community centres).

Keep Good Records: Keep in mind that if you decide to offer mobile care in your community, the task of selecting space will be ongoing. Whenever possible, gather information from CNC staff on spaces that they feel worked well for CNC. For future reference, also maintain a record of partners who you have worked with and the spaces you have used

Use the CNC Space Safety Checklist: CNC staff will use the CNC Space Safety Checklist (found in the CNCR) to confirm space safety each time mobile short-term CNC is provided.

Visit cmascanada.ca for more resources to support your work with newcomer families



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